

April 13, 2000

To Whom It May Concern:

The West Virginia Developmental Disabilities Council promotes **Self-Determination** for persons with developmental disabilities and their families. The Council believes that each person must have **FREEDOM** to exercise the same rights as all other citizens; **AUTHORITY** to control the resources that are needed for one's own support; **SUPPORT** needed to aid the individual in leading an inclusive, productive and independent life; and **RESPONSIBILITIES** including the ordinary obligations of American citizens that allow individuals to contribute to their communities in meaningful ways.

On April 11, 2000 the Developmental Disabilities Council joined other disabilities related advocacy organizations in adopting the following statement on **Self-Determination**:

The WV Developmental Disabilities Council believes the following principles must be followed in order for freedom and choice to be realized by all people.

In the domain of Human Rights:

All people have fundamental moral and constitutional rights.

These rights must not be abrogated
merely because a person has a
mental or physical disability.

Among these fundamental rights is
the right to live in the community of their choice;
to pursue the vocational/educational
goals which are consistent with their talents and preferences; and
to be free to engage in a full range of activities across their
life span including, but not limited to: school, competitive
employment, parenting and retirement.

Individuals must be allowed maximum control
of their available resources in order to live-out their dreams to the
fullest extent.

We all have the right to self-determination.

As human beings we are all inherently valuable.

All people can grow and develop.

All people are entitled to conditions which foster their development.

Such conditions are optimally provided
in community settings which are controlled and determined by the individual.

Laura Helems, Chairperson

Steven A. Wiseman, Executive Director